

California Mentor Initiative



QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS

*Presented to and accepted by the
California Mentor Coalition*

*Source: National Mentoring Working Group, convened by United Way of America and One to One
the National Mentoring Partnership, 1991*

DEFINITION OF MENTORING

MENTORING DEFINED AS:

For the purposes of the California Mentoring Initiative, mentoring is defined as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where older, wiser, more experienced individuals provide constant, as needed support, guidance, and concrete help to the younger at-risk persons as they go through life. An “at-risk” youth is a minor whose environment increases their chance of becoming a teen parent, school dropout, gang member, or user of alcohol and drugs.

CALIFORNIA MENTORING ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE:

For purposes of the California Mentoring Initiative the following have been identified as California’s Quality Assurance Standards.

A RESPONSIBLE MENTORING PROGRAM REQUIRES:

- A well-defined mission and established operating policy.
- Regular, consistent contact between the mentor and the participant.
- Consent by the family or guardian of the mentee.
- Additional community support services.
- An established organization for oversight.
- Adherence to general principles of volunteerism.
- Paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills.
- Written job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions.
- Adherence to EEO requirements.
- Inclusiveness of racial, economic, and gender representation as appropriate to the program.
- Adequate financial and in-kind resources.
- Written administrative and program procedures.
- Written eligibility requirements for program participants.
- Program evaluation and ongoing assessment.

- A long-range plan that has community input.
- Risk management and confidentiality policies.
- Use of generally accepted accounting practices.
- A prudent and reasonable rationale for staffing requirements that are based on:
 - Organization's statement of purpose and goals
 - Needs of mentors and mentees
 - Community resources
 - Staff and other volunteers' skill level

FOR PURPOSES OF THE
CALIFORNIA MENTOR INITIATIVE,
QUALITY MENTORING PROGRAMS
NEED TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

1. A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND A LONG RANGE PLAN THAT INCLUDES:
 - Who, what, where, when, why and how activities will be performed.
 - Input from originators, staff, funders, potential volunteers, and participants.
 - Assessment of community need.
 - Realistic, attainable, and easy-to-understand operational plan.
 - Goals, objectives, and timelines for all aspects of the plan.
 - Funding and resources development plan.
2. A RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR BOTH MENTORS AND MENTEES THAT INCLUDES:
 - Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits. Year round marketing and public relations. Targeted outreach based on participant's needs.
 - Volunteer opportunities beyond mentoring.
 - A basis in your program's statement of purpose and long-range plan.
3. AN ORIENTATION FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES THAT INCLUDES:
 - Program overview.
 - Description of eligibility, screening process, and suitability requirements.
 - Level of commitment expected (time, energy, and flexibility).
 - Expectations and restrictions (accountability).
 - Benefits and rewards they can expect.
 - A separate focus for potential mentors and participants.
 - A summary of program policies, including written reports, interviews evaluation, and reimbursement.

4. ELIGIBILITY SCREENING FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES THAT INCLUDES:

- An application process and review.
- Face-to-face interview.
- Reference checks for mentors which must include finger printing, and criminal record checks where legally permissible, and may include character references, child abuse registry check, and driving record checks.
- Suitability criteria that relate to the program statement of purpose and needs of the target population. Could include some or all of the following: personality profile; skills identification; gender; age; language and racial requirements; level of education; career interests; motivation for volunteering; and academic standing.
- Successful completion of pre-match training and orientation.

5. A READINESS AND TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR ALL MENTORS AND MENTEES THAT INCLUDES:

- Trained staff trainers.
- Orientation to program and resource network, including information and referral, other supportive services, and schools.
- Skills development as appropriate.
- Cultural/heritage sensitivity and appreciation training.
- Guidelines for participants on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship.
- Do's and don'ts of relationship management.
- Job and role descriptions.
- Confidentiality and liability information.
- Crisis management/problem solving resources.
- Communication skills development.
- Ongoing sessions as necessary.

6. A MATCHING STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES:

- A link with the program's statement of purpose.
- A commitment to consistency.
- A grounding in the program's eligibility criteria.
- A rationale for the selection of this particular matching strategy from the wide range of available models.
- Appropriate criteria for matches, including some or all of the following: gender; age; language; requirements; availability; needs; interests; preferences of volunteer and participant; life experience; temperament.
- Signed statements of understanding that both parties agree to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship.
- The program may have pre-match social activities between mentor and mentees.
- Team building activities to reduce the anxiety of the first meeting.

7. A MONITORING PROCESS THAT INCLUDES:

- Consistent scheduled meetings with staff, mentors, and mentees.
- A tracking system for ongoing assessment.
- Written records.
- Input from family, community partners, and significant others.
- A process for managing grievances, praise, rematching, interpersonal problem solving, and premature relationship closure.

8. A SUPPORT, RECOGNITION AND RETENTION COMPONENT THAT MAY INCLUDE:

- A formal kick-off event.
- Ongoing peer support groups for volunteers, participants, and others.
- Ongoing training and development.
- Relevant issue discussion and information dissemination.
- Networking with appropriate organizations.
- Social gatherings of different groups as needed.
- Annual recognition and appreciation event.
- Newsletters or other mailings to mentors, mentees, supporters, and funders.

9. CLOSURE STEPS THAT INCLUDE:

- Private and confidential exit interviews to de-brief the mentoring relationship between:
 - Participant and staff
 - Mentor and staff
 - Mentor and mentee without staff
- Clearly stated policy for future contacts.
- Assistance for participating in defining next steps for achieving personal goals.

10. AN EVALUATION PROCESS BASED ON:

- Outcome analysis of program and relationship.
- Program criteria and statement of purpose.
- Information needs of board, funders, community partners, and other supporters of the program.